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LETTER DATED 12 JUNE 1998 FROM THE DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PORTUGAL TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the press release issued on 2 June 1998 by the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola, on the situation in Angola (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) José Tadeu SOARES
Ambassador
Deputy Permanent Representative of Portugal
to the United Nations

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Annex

Press release issued by the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola

ANGOLA: TROIKA DEPLORES FURTHER DELAYS BY THE NATIONAL UNION FOR THE TOTAL INDEPENDENCE OF ANGOLA IN THE NORMALIZATION OF STATE ADMINISTRATION

The troika of observer States to the Angolan Peace Process today deplored continuing delays by the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) in the conclusion of the extension of State administration, in particular in Andulo, N'Harea, Bailundo and Mungo. UNITA has so far returned to the Central Government two hundred seventy-two (272) of the three hundred thirty-five (335) areas it used to control.

The Ambassadors of Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States of America today took part in a follow-up meeting of the Joint Commission to discuss UNITA's new proposal to conclude that exercise by the end of June.

It is recalled that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Angola, Maitre Alioune Blondin Beye, had presented to the parties a plan to overcome the current deadlock in the peace process.

After a tour of Zambia, Namibia and Zimbabwe, where he had met with the Heads of State of the three countries, Maitre Beye travelled to Andulo on Saturday at the request of UNITA's leader to discuss the implementation of his plan by UNITA. The three ambassadors were also present.

The UNITA leadership argues that the current security situation in the country is not conducive to the return of the so-called four sensitive areas, but that it would nevertheless continue to honour its commitment to the peace process by agreeing to start the second stage of the three-stage normalization process between 17 and 21 June. The process would be completed by the end of June, according to UNITA.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General announced that he would likely travel this week to New York to hold consultations with the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the latest developments in the peace process. The Security Council will review a report from the Secretary-General on Angola later this month.

The Joint Commission also discussed the security situation in the country and condemned what seems to be an obvious attempt to isolate the province of Malange by an organized pattern of attacks and ambushes.

The Commission condemned an armed attack against a convoy belonging to a non-governmental organization, Worldvision, in the vicinity of Malange. The Joint Commission also reminded the Government that the Observer Mission must first be notified of the movements of its armed forces.

On the other hand, as part of its verification exercise on UNITA's effective demilitarization, the Observer Mission confirms the existence of now demobilized UNITA forces in the provinces of Uige, Malange, Lunda Norte, Lunda Sul and Bie. UNITA had declared earlier in March that it had completed the demilitarization of its forces.

But the Joint Commission could not confirm an alleged concentration of UNITA military forces at the confluence of the Lomba and Camaxilo rivers.

The Joint Commission will meet again tomorrow in a follow-up meeting to review the State media's reporting of the security situation. The Commission had agreed that no allegations of incidents should be reported without prior confirmation by the Observer Mission.